

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the final Office Action dated December 8, 2005, claims 1-3 and 11-15 were rejected, claims 12 and 16-19 were objected to, and claims 4-10 were allowed. The Advisory Action dated April 25, 2006 maintained the rejections of claims 1-3 and 11-15, the objections to claims 16-19, and the allowance of claims 4-10. Applicant has thoroughly reviewed the outstanding final Office Action and the Advisory Action, including the Examiner's remarks and the references cited therein. The above claim amendments and following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the final Office Action and the Advisory Action. All the claims at issue have either previously been allowed or have been amended herein to include subject matter which has previously been recognized by the Examiner as allowable.

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 4-11 and 17-19 will be pending in the present application. Claims 4-10 have already been allowed. Claim 11 has been amended exclusively to incorporate all of the subject matter previously recited in claim 16 and the subject matter of claim 16 has been acknowledged to be allowable. Hence, no new matter has been added and no new issues have been raised.

Objection to Claim 12 for Allegedly Improperly Removing a Limitation Previously Set Forth:

Claim 12 has been objected to for allegedly improperly removing a limitation previously set forth. The above cancellation of claim 12 directly addresses the Examiner's comments and renders this objection moot. At least in view of the above cancellation of claim 12 and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claim 12 for allegedly improperly removing a limitation previously set forth is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims 11-15 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b):

Claims 11-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,774,568 to Borst et al. (Borst '568). The above amendment of claim 11 and cancellation of claims 12-15 directly addresses the Examiner's comments and renders this rejection of claims 11-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) moot. More specifically, the above amendment of claim 11 incorporates all of the subject matter previously recited in claim 16, which has been acknowledged by the Examiner to be allowable subject matter. At least in view of the above amendment of claim 11, cancellation of claims 12-15, and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 11-15 as being anticipated by Borst '568 is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims 1-3 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e):

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,276,977 to Treinen et al. (Treinen '977). The above cancellation of claims 1-3 directly addresses the Examiner's comments and renders this rejection moot. At least in view of the above cancellation of claims 1-3 and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Treinen '977 is respectfully requested.

Objection to Claims 16-19 as Being Dependent Upon a Rejected Base Claim:

Claims 16-19 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The above cancellation of claim 16 and the incorporation of all of the subject matter previously recited

therein into claim 11 directly addresses the Examiner's comments and renders this objection moot. At least in view of the above cancellation of claim 16 and amendment of claim 11, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claims 16-19 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim is respectfully requested.


CONCLUSION

At least in view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If it is believed that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney if it is believed that such contact will expedite the prosecution of the application.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, Applicant petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-2036.

Respectfully submitted,

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